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# Job vacancies decline but remain higher than pre-COVID

Media Release

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**i** Source: [Job Vacancies, Australia, August 2021](#)

Job vacancies declined by 10 per cent between May and August 2021 but remained 46 per cent above the start of the pandemic, according to new seasonally adjusted figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: "The fall in job vacancies in August 2021 coincided with lockdowns in place in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory, and followed lockdowns in Queensland and South Australia. It was the first drop in vacancies since May 2020, during the initial wave of COVID-related lockdowns and restrictions.

"There were 334,000 job vacancies in August 2021, which was 36,000 less than in May 2021. However, this was still 106,000 more than at the start of the pandemic.

"The percentage of businesses reporting at least one vacancy fell from 22 per cent in May 2021 to 20 per cent in August 2021. This was still much higher than February 2020 (11 per cent), before the start of the pandemic, and many businesses continued to report difficulties in filling their vacancies."

The fall in job vacancies over the quarter was concentrated in the private sector (down by 11 per cent), while the public sector job vacancies increased by 2 per cent. However, vacancies in the private sector were 49 per cent higher than the start of the pandemic, compared with 27 per cent in the public sector.

In original terms, the biggest declines in the quarter were in New South Wales and South Australia (both down by 16 per cent). Northern Territory and Western Australia experienced the largest growth (21 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

The industries with the largest percentage falls in job vacancies over the quarter were Accommodation and food services (down by 28 per cent), Arts and recreation services (down by 27 per cent), and Rental, hiring and real estate services (down by 26 per cent). These were also the three industries that experienced the largest falls in vacancies early in the pandemic.

The ABS would like to thank businesses in Australia for their continued support in responding to our surveys during these challenging times.



## Media notes

- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- For the purposes of this publication, 'pre-COVID' refers to the February 2020 Job Vacancies, which was before the main impact of restrictions on businesses.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team

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